



## MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

**Meeting Date:** August 20, 2014  
**Agenda Item:** State Park User Fees  
**Division:** Parks  
**Action Needed:** Proposed  
**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 minutes

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**Background:** User fees represent approximately 38% of the annual earned revenue needed to support the Montana State Park system. Current user fees were adopted by the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission in December 2012 in the Parks Biennial Fee Rule and are scheduled to expire in December 2014. The Parks Division proposes an updated Biennial Fee Rule that includes the following highlights:

- A 20% increase in fees for camping, electrical service at campsites, non-resident daily entry, non-resident annual entrance pass, Lewis & Clark Caverns tours, rental of cabins, yurts and tipis and use of showers.
- Holders of a non-resident annual entrance pass would be subject to the same camping fees as residents.
- Establish new categories and fees for rustic campsites, wild cave tours and sewage dump stations.
- Establish a sliding fee schedule based on group size for use of meeting rooms, shelters, pavilions, and other facilities, etc.
- Establish the authority to implement “premium” campsite fees

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** Upon tentative approval of the proposed user fees, the Parks Division will solicit public comment for a 30 day period. Following public comment analysis a final Biennial Fee Rule will be presented at the October Board meeting.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The Parks Division has conducted internal staff dialogue regarding potential changes to user fees along with comparability research of recreational user fees in neighboring state park systems, federal public lands and private entities. This survey included an analysis of camping fees, day use/entry fees, lodging, facility, tour and special event fees and also addresses fee differentials (spatial and temporal) and fee discount programs. Handouts summarizing the internal staff survey and the comparability survey were provided at the June 2014 Board meeting.

The following alternatives have been identified regarding updated user fees:

- 1) Adopt an updated Biennial Fee Rule with no significant fee changes
- 2) Adopt an updated Biennial Fee Rule with modest fee increases

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** The Parks Division proposes an updated Biennial Fee Rule with modest fee increases. User fees provide a critical source of revenue to support the state park system. The last increase in park user fees occurred in 2010 and was applicable to non-resident camping fees and new camping reservation fees only. The last user fee increase for residents occurred in 2003.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the Board authorize the Parks Division to seek public comment on the user fees as proposed in the 2014 Biennial Fee Rule.